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THE HOMONYM QUESTION

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To close in a constructive vein the discussion about homonyms which has taken place in these pages, I owe the reader certain facts. Mr. A. Cronquist and Mr. C. A. Weatherby are correct in pointing out (*Madrono* 7: 83. 1943) that an earlier homonym—in the sense of Article 61 of the International Rules of Botanical Nomenclature—can be only a name which is validly published. Validity in publication, consequently, is essential to an homonym, for without it there is no homonymy.

This being the case, I point out that: (1) In the "Proposals of the British Botanists" (*Intern. Bot. Congr. Cambridge* 1930: 43. 1929) nothing is said about validity. (2) In the discussion that led to the adoption of Art. 61 (*Rept. Proc. Intern. Bot. Congr. Cambridge* 600-604, 1931) the discussion never touched upon the validity of an earlier homonym. (3) In her authoritative comment on the Cambridge Rules (*in Emp. For. Jour.* 10: 68. 1931) Miss M. L. Green said nothing about validity.

The meaning of an Article in the Rules is to be read in the text of the Article, which I will not deny. However, Art. 61 lays down validity as the fundamental requirement of homonymy. It is strange that this requirement should not be mentioned at all in the antecedents and comments written upon this Article. This omission should be understood in the light of the fact that meaningless or confusing additions are known to have been introduced into the Rules beyond the intentions of the proponents of certain Articles (*Croizat, Bull. Torrey Club* 70: 322. 1943).

It is evident, therefore, that by insisting upon validity of publication, Article 61 leaves completely unsettled the state of the legion of names commonly understood as *nomina subnuda*, *nomina abortiva*, and the like. The prime necessity of providing for these doubtful entities in nomenclature was quite clear to A. DeCandolle

(Lois. Nom. Bot., Art. 45, 46—Commentaires 45. 1867), and certainly was in the minds of those who wrote that Article 61 was intended to provide for names "published . . . with a description (or references to a former description)." By steering clear of the morass of what is *valid*, the Proposal just quoted was far better than Article 61 itself, which does not work in any case involving names of doubtful publication. It is not correct to state that validity and legitimacy are clear concepts. Without further entering into the matter, I may point out that Handel-Mazzetti proposed the outright cancellation of Article 61 (Fedde Rep. Sp. Nov. 46: 91. 1939) mainly on the ground that it was not clear in its definitions, and was ruinous in actual practice. I do not wholly agree with Handel-Mazzetti to the full, but his testimony, as such, is valuable here.

My very definite opinion was, and still is, that the adjective *valid* was not meant to be written in Article 61 and that for the good of taxonomy it should be removed. A formal proposal to this effect, with an appropriate discussion and examples, will be submitted to the Botanical Congress in due time.

Arnold Arboretum,
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NOTES AND NEWS

A NEW NAME IN SCIRPUS. *Scirpus orbicephala* nom. nov. *Holoschoenus mexicanus* Palla, Oesterr. Bot.-Zeitschr. 63: 40. 1913. Not *Scirpus mexicanus* Clarke in Britton, Trans. N. Y. Acad. Sci. 11: 77. 1892. Subgenus *Euscirpus*. Section *Anosporum*. Mexico: Flor de Maria, *Pringle 3173*; Huerta, Loma Santa Maria, and Cerro Azul, *Arsenius*. Although described under the genus *Holoschoenus*, now a section of *Scirpus*, the species *H. mexicanus* Palla is recognized as belonging to the genus *Scirpus*, section *Anosporum*. A. A. BEETLE, Division of Agronomy, University of California, Davis.

Word was received on December 20, 1943, that Dr. W. Palmer Stockwell of the California Forest Experiment Station of the United States Forest Service had arrived in Lisbon, Portugal. With a representative of the Crown Cork and Seal Company, Dr. Stockwell expects to spend several months in the Mediterranean region. They will visit nurseries and plantations in Portugal, Spain, Spanish Morocco, Algiers and Tunisia in addition to making a study of the native habitat of the cork oak. In collaboration with the Crown Cork and Seal Company, the Forest Service plans to bring back several tons of seed from select cork oak trees and carry on further experimentation in this country in the hope of developing a successful cork oak industry here.